

THE COMMITTEE OF BAR EXAMINERS  
OF  
THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA



## TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

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*This information can be made available in alternative formats, i.e., audio cassette, braille, electronic disk or large print, by writing the San Francisco Office of Admissions to the attention of the Testing Accommodations Department or calling (415) 538-2185.*

### 1. Does the Committee of Bar Examiners Offer Testing Accommodations for Applicants with Disabilities?

Yes. The Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee) provides reasonable testing accommodations for qualified applicants with disabilities. Each applicant's request for testing accommodations is considered on its individual merits. Accommodations are provided for all examinations administered by the Committee.

"Testing Accommodations" means an adjustment or modification of the standard testing conditions without doing any of the following:

- fundamentally altering the nature of the examination or the Committee's ability to determine through the examination whether the applicant possesses the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to be licensed to practice law; or
- imposing an undue administrative or financial burden on the Committee; or
- compromising the validity, reliability or security of the examination; or
- providing an unfair advantage.

### 2. What Kinds of Disabilities are Accommodated?

Accommodations are provided to individuals with physical or mental impairments who establish that their disabilities limit their ability to demonstrate under standard testing conditions that they possess the knowledge, skills and abilities tested on the examinations administered by the Committee. Individuals with disabilities who request accommodations from the Committee must document their requests as specified by the Committee.

### 3. What Kinds of Accommodations are Provided?

The Committee has approved various types of accommodations including, but not limited to, the following: readers, typists, additional time, audio cassette versions of the examination, braille, large print examination materials, sign language interpreters and testing in private rooms.

#### **4. When Should an Applicant Submit a Petition for Accommodations?**

Applicants with permanent disabilities intending to take the California Bar Examination may file their petitions for testing accommodations at any time after they have registered with the Committee and law students are strongly encouraged to file their petitions no later than the beginning of their last year of law study. Applicants should file their petitions no later than four months prior to administration of the examination they intend to take. Petitions received after the final filing deadline for the examination they wish to take and those that are filed in an incomplete manner will not be accepted for processing. Early filing allows sufficient time for full review of an applicant's petition, including providing additional information and/or filing appeals if appropriate. Applicants who wait to file their requests near the final filing deadline may not have the opportunity to exhaust all administrative avenues before administration of the examination, such as appealing the decision of the Senior Executive, Admissions to the Committee.

"Emergency Petitions" may be filed by applicants who become injured after the final filing deadline, but such petitions must explain why the petition was not filed timely, in addition to requesting the accommodations that the applicants believe are needed to address the effects of their injuries and providing the appropriate documentation. Even if a disability has been established, accommodations may not be extended if it is determined that such cannot be arranged in a reasonable amount of time before administration of the examination.

Applicants must file separate applications to take an examination by the deadlines noted in the application instructions that are published for each examination. Filing a petition for testing accommodations does not initiate the process for application to take an examination; nor does filing the examination application and marking the box indicating an intent to file a petition initiate the petition process. The process for those with permanent disabilities repeating an examination wishing exactly the same accommodations may be somewhat different as discussed in the instructions for applying to take the next administration of the examination.

#### **5. How Do Applicants with Disabilities Request Accommodations?**

Applicants can either request a petition packet from the Office of Admissions or download the instructions and forms through the Internet from the Admissions portion of the State Bar of California's website located at [www.calbar.ca.gov/admissions](http://www.calbar.ca.gov/admissions). In addition to instructions and various disability guidelines, applicants must read and complete the appropriate forms. The forms include:

1. Form A, which must be completed by the applicant;
2. Form B (physical disability verification);
3. Form C (learning disability verification);
4. Form D (AD/HD verification);
5. Form E (mental disability verification);
6. Form F (law school verification);
7. Form G (Bar admissions administrator verification).

Form B must be completed by an appropriate medical professional and Forms C, D and E must be completed by appropriate professionals, who are identified in the forms. Applicants should not complete the forms for their specialists' signatures. Providing false documentation will be a matter for consideration during the moral character determination process.

#### **6. Is There a Fee Charged for Filing a Petition for Testing Accommodations?**

No. Other than the regular examination application fees, including late fees if an application is submitted after the timely filing deadline and typing or laptop computer fees, no additional fees will be charged for filing a petition for testing accommodations.

#### **7. How Long Will it Take to Receive a Decision Regarding a Petition for Testing Accommodations?**

Complete testing accommodations petitions will be processed as expeditiously as possible. Within thirty days an applicant will receive acknowledgment that the petition has been received and that processing has begun. A decision regarding a petition may be forwarded within thirty to one hundred and twenty days, depending on the complexity of the petition and whether more information is requested and/or whether the petition must be reviewed by outside consultants.

## **8. How are Decisions Made Regarding Testing Accommodations Petitions?**

A determination is made by the Senior Executive, Admissions, or his/her designee, after reviewing the testing accommodations petition filed by the applicant, which includes all forms and documentation submitted, and in some cases after receiving advice from one or more of the expert consultants retained by the Committee. Each testing accommodations petition is considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **9. What if the Request for Testing Accommodations is Denied?**

An applicant may appeal a determination of denial regarding his/her testing accommodation petition by filing an appeal that conforms with the Committee's rules and policies.

## **10. Which Test Center Can Accommodate Applicants with Disabilities?**

There are designated testing accommodations test centers in the greater Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco/Oakland Bay and Sacramento areas.

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